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"Write it Out in Your Own Form": Tom Paulin's Translation of European Poetry

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Abstract

The contemporary poet Tom Paulin attempts to communicate a new perspective on modern-day Northern Ireland through the lens of foreign literary traditions. He chooses translation as a means to give voice to his political views. Seizing upon the differences and similarities of Northern Ireland and various European countries, he sets out to subvert the traditional interpretations of the Northern Irish conflict. This article focuses on Paulin's translation of poems by Anna Akhmatova, Paul Verlaine and Heinrich Heine and explores the different ways in which the poet transplants the Russian, French and German originals into a new cultural context.

Keywords: Translation, poetry, Northern Ireland, Tom Paulin, Paul Verlaine, Anna Akhmatova, Heinrich Heine.

Résumé

Le poète contemporain Tom Paulin s'est fixé comme objectif de transmettre une nouvelle façon de considérer l'Irlande du Nord par le prisme de traditions littéraires cosmopolites. Chez Paulin la traduction devient un moyen d'expression politique. Il joue des différences et des similitudes qui peuvent exister entre l'Irlande du Nord actuelle et d'autres pays pour déconstruire les interprétations traditionnelles du conflit nord irlandais. Cet article porte sur les traductions par Paulin de poèmes de Paul Verlaine, Anna Akhmatova et Heinrich Heine. Dans ce contexte, nous explorerons les différentes manières dont Paulin transplante les originaux russes, français et allemands dans un nouvel environnement culturel.

Mots clé: Traduction, poésie, Irlande du Nord, Tom Paulin, Paul Verlaine, Anna Akhmatova, Heinrich Heine

As one of the most influential contemporary Northern Irish poets, Tom Paulin chooses translation as a mode of discourse in order to come to terms with the Troubles. Among Northern Irish writers, he is not the only one having become interested in the poetic possibilities offered by the translation and adaptation of foreign literary works. Next to Paulin, Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel and Ciaran Carson are the most prominent authors who employ translation as a strategy to gain a detached perspective on the local situation. The extent to which Pau-

lin's writing relies on the translation of European poetry is, however, significant. In his poetry collection *The Road to Inver. Translations, Versions, Imitations*[1], he engages with the work of more than thirty European poets. The different poems become interconnected to each other through recurrent themes and images alluding to Northern Ireland. The French, German and Russian literary traditions occupy a particularly important place in Paulin's oeuvre. Nevertheless, the amount of his translation of French poems is very striking. Whereas he translates different poems from four Russian and five German poets, he takes the work of eight French writers as the basis for his translations[2]. Paulin's special attention to French poetry could be explained by his knowledge of the French language. In a personal email exchange, he admits that his translations of Russian and German poems are based on pre-existing translations, whose sources he was unable to remember. In the case of his translations of French poetry, he maintains to have worked directly from the originals[3]. Comparing Paulin's translation of French, German or Russian poems, it becomes evident that the poet does not apply a specific translational strategy to a particular literary tradition. His approach to translation seems to work on a more general level. Whereas in some cases he engages with the foreign original intensively before moving away from it, most of the time he digresses significantly from the source after a short involvement with it. Through the identification with foreign cultures, histories and political struggles, Paulin attempts to subvert traditional interpretations of the Northern Irish conflict.

Whereas he does not explain his individual translation strategy in his critical writing, his aesthetics of translation become indirectly conveyed in his poetry. "Une Rue Solitaire", the final poem of *The Road to Inver*, could in particular be read as a reference to Paulin's approach to translation practice. The poem, which is the only work of the collection not based on a foreign original, takes the form of an epilogue written in English and French:

> You find the poem's title
> But not the poem
> maybe it does exist so you can try till
> the what's-it? Of dawn – till dayclean –
> try write it out in your own form
> of this language[4]?

1. Tom Paulin, *The Road to Inver. Translations, Versions, Imitations*, London, Faber, 2004.
2. Paulin translates works from the following French poets into English: Paul Verlaine, Charles Baudelaire, André Chénier, Arthur Rimbaud, Albert Camus, Gérard de Nerval, Tristan Corbière and Stéphane Mallarmé. The German poets whose work form the basis of Paulin's translations are Rainer Maria Rilke, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Heinrich Heine, Bertold Brecht and Simon Dach. The Russian originals used by Paulin are poems by Anne Akhmatova, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Marina Tsvetaeva and Alexander Pushkin.
3. Cf. personal email received from Tom Paulin on 04.02.2009.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Paulin's lines hint at the fact that in *The Road to Inver* the boundaries between translation and creation frequently become blurred. Even if the reader is able to track down the original poem thanks to its title, he or she might not recognize the source text without difficulty. With the line "try write it out in your own form of this language", Paulin suggests that a translator has to discover his or her individual voice and insert it into the translation of a poem. Thus, he suggests that his translations of poetry in *The Road to Inver* are to be considered as poems in their own right.

In Paulin's poetics, the concepts "translation", "version" and "imitation" cannot precisely be distinguished from each other. Therefore, I have opted to employ in the following study "translation" as a general term and chosen to make use of different translation theories to engage with the various poems. As examples taken from the Russian, French and German literary traditions, Paulin's translations of Anna Akhmatova's "Leningrad, Mart 1941" ("Leningrad, March 1941")[5], Paul Verlaine's "Le Squelette" ("The Skeleton")[6] and Heinrich Heine's "Wenn ich beseeligt von schönen Küssen" ("When I made happy by beautiful kisses")[7] shall be explored. In this context, I will refer to Lawrence Venuti's concept of domestication and foreignization[8], as well as the theories of André Lefevere and Clive Scott, who consider translations as "rewritings[9]" or acts of "experimental writings"[10]. In a domesticating translation, terms and concepts closely connected to the source culture become replaced by expressions and value systems typical of the receiving culture. Thus, the original becomes reconstituted in accordance with received concepts of the translator's cultural environment. The foreign elements of the source text become almost entirely eliminated so that the translation reads as an original in which the translator becomes invisible. A foreignizing translation strategy, on the contrary, aims at non-fluent or "estranging" translations, which are designed to highlight the presence of the translator by underlining the foreign identity of the source text[11]. In the subsequent analysis, all of the three translations shall be regarded as "domesticating" ones. As they are, however, "domesticating" to different degrees, I will also engage with the above mentioned theories by Scott and Lefevere in the case of those poems, which digress considerably from their sources. Both critics see translation as an act of communication in which the translator offers his personal interpretation or reading of a particular source. As a

5. Anna Akhmatova, *Beg Vremini*, Moscow, Slovo, 1995, p. 282.
6. Paul Verlaine, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1992, p. 149-150.
7. Heinrich Heine, *Werke und Briefe*. Berlin, Aufbau Verlag, 1972, p. 279.
8. L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 19-20.
9. C. Scott, *Translating Rimbaud's "Illuminations"*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2006, p. 13; Lefevere, A., *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London, Routledge, 1992, p. vii.
10. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
11. Venuti, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

result, certain elements of the target text are bound to be alien to their source[12]. In the following analysis, light shall be shed on the reasons why Paulin feels compelled to strive for otherness and "elsewheres" outside Ireland in order to overcome the established political framework of Irish Nationalism and British Unionism. Furthermore, I will explore the ways in which the poet uses translation in order to reconsider established notions of power structures through the lens of different literary traditions.

The translation of Akhmatova's "Leningrad, March 1941" can be regarded as a domesticating one as Paulin engages with the Russian original intensively in order to imbue it with Northern Irish connotations. In his translation of Akhmatova's poem, he visibly inscribes the target text with concepts and socio-political standards from his own cultural environment. Speaking in Venuti's terms, the approach followed by Paulin aims at "an ethnocentric reduction[13]" of the foreign text to dominant values of the target culture. This means that Akhmatova's references to Russian culture and history are transposed into a Northern Irish environment, where they receive additional connotations. Through his translation of "Leningrad, March 1941", he sets out to articulate his critical attitude towards Ulster Protestantism and the British government. Paulin's political viewpoints stem from his ethno-religious background and his rejection of it. Having grown up in Belfast's Protestant community, he turned his back on Ulster Unionism when he became aware of the social inequality created by the British establishment[14]. He initially believed that "greater social justice in Northern Ireland could be achieved within the context of the United Kingdom"[15]. As a young man, however, Paulin came to support the Civil Rights movement and to sympathise with the Catholic community. Ever since, he has rejected the establishments of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches as instances of power and control. Therefore, he cherishes the idea of a United Ireland in form of a "non-sectarian, republican state which comprises the whole island of Ireland[16]".

His political points of view penetrate into his poetry to varying degrees. In his translation of "Leningrad, March 1941", Paulin establishes a connection between Russia and Northern Ireland through the shared experience of German invasion in 1941. On a second level, he employs Russian and Irish history during the Second World War as a lens through which he sets out to explore the Northern Irish Troubles. It is striking that in his translation Paulin does not adopt the exact wording of the Russian title but transforms "Leningrad, March 1941" into

12. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Lefevere, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
13. Venuti, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
14. J. Haffenden., *Viewpoints. Poets in Conversation*, London, Faber, 1981, p. 159.
15. Tom Paulin, *Ireland and the English Crisis*, Newcastle, Bloodaxe Books, 1984, p. 16.
16. Paulin, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

"March, 1941". Omitting the reference to the Russian city, he delocalises Akhmatova's poem and thus opens it up to a broader range of interpretations. The title of the Russian original evokes a period of Russian history leading up to the siege of Leningrad, which lasted from September 1941 until January 1944. During the blockade, the city was occupied by the German army and more than half a million people died of starvation[17]. Akhmatova's poem captures the atmosphere of looming disaster, reigning before the German attack. Stripped of the reference to the former capital, Paulin's title "March, 1941" reads as an allusion to the Blitz of Belfast, a series of Nazi bombings, which took place in the spring of 1941. Creating a correlation between Russia and Northern Ireland, Paulin evokes the common experience of warfare and political assault. It could be argued that by means of his translation, he transposes the mood of public anxiety in 1941 to the time before the outbreak of the Northern Irish conflict in 1968.

In the title of her poem, Akhmatova refers to the former capital as "Leningrad" and not "St. Petersburg" and thus she underscores the poem's setting during the Soviet era[18]:

Cadran solaire на Меньшиковом доме. Подняв волну, проходит пароход. О, есть ли что на свете мне знакомей, Чем шпилей блеск и отблеск этих вод!	There is a sundial on the Menshikov house. A boat passes, rising a wave. Oh, if there is on earth anything more familiar to me than the shine of the spires and the reflections of these waters.	A sundial on the Menshikov house a boat makes a stir as it passes there's nothing no nothing more familiar to me than the cool glaze of the spires lying flat out on the water
(Akhmatova [a])	(my translation)	(Paulin [b])

a. Akhmatova, *op. cit.*, p. 282.
b. Paulin, The *Road, op. cit.*, p. 72.

With her reference to Menshikov's house, Akhmatova establishes a relationship between the city's past and present. Menshikov acted as Peter the Great's chief adviser and gained considerable political influence in 18th century Russia. He managed to accumulate a vast fortune, which he displayed through the construction of an opulent residence. Employing the French word "cadran solaire" instead of its Russian equivalent, Akhmatova uses the language spoken by the Russian

17. R. Service, *A History of Modern Russia. From Nicolas II to Putin*, London, Penguin, 2003, p. 266-267.
18. My translations of Verlaine's, Heine's and Pushkin's poems given in this study are intended to provide an understanding of the original texts for the non-franco-, germano- or russophone reader. For that reason, they are source orientated and designed to reveal as much as possible of the originals' content. In order to enhance the clarity of the content, I have chosen not to imitate the rhyme and verse patterns of the various source texts.

aristocracy and thus transposes her reference to 18th century Russia. Her allusion to the city at the time of Peter the Great presents a contrast to the title of the poem "Leningrad, March 1941". Evoking different periods of Russian history, Akhmatova establishes a link between tsarist St. Petersburg and post-revolutionary Leningrad. With the image of the "cadran solaire", she hints at time elapsing and suggests that the glorious era of Peter the Great belongs to the past.

In his translation, Paulin replaces the French term "cadran solaire" with its English equivalent "sundial". In so doing, he deliberately ignores Akhmatova's subtle allusion to 18th century Russia and underlines the location of the target text in an English speaking environment. Deciding not to keep "cadran solaire" as a "foreignising element[19]", Paulin aims at a domestication of the French term used in the Russian original. Paulin takes up Akhmatova's reference to Menshikov's house and thus maintains the allusion to treason and greed made in the source text. In a Northern Irish context, the image of Menshikov reads as a subversive allusion to the Protestant community, which gained social and material advantages over their Catholic counterpart through favouritism and discrimination.

In "March, 1941", Paulin enforces Akhmatova's prophecy of trouble. He creates an even more threatening feeling than in the Russian original through the use of terms and images, which are stronger than those employed by Akhmatova. The line "a boat passes, rising a wave" is translated by Paulin as "a boat makes a stir as it passes". Replacing "wave" by "stir", he chooses a term which evokes a more violent movement and at the same time brings to mind the expression to "stir up trouble". Furthermore, Paulin plays with the second connotation of the term "stir", which in contemporary slang is used for "prison[20]". Hinting at incarceration and captivity, he evokes the political detainees kept in various interment camps during the Troubles. Through the different meanings of "stir", Paulin points at looming disaster in a more explicit and emphatic way than Akhmatova. Paulin translates the line "Oh, if there is on earth anything more familiar to me…" with the vernacular turn of phrase "there's nothing no nothing more familiar to me", and thus clearly situates his poem in Northern Ireland. In so doing, using Venuti's terms, Paulin "domesticates[21]" the setting of the Russian original. Through the use of local speech, he gives his lines an ironic dimension. With "nothing more familiar", Paulin further hints at the tense political situation in Northern Ireland. In this way, he suggests that even if signs of trouble were already showing, social problems were ignored on purpose by the British government and the Protestant community. Paulin's inclusion of the vernacular underlines his attempt to produce a domesticating translation of the Russian original.

19. Venuti, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20.
20. J. M. Sinclair, *English Dictionary. 21st Century Edition*, Glasgow, Harper Collins, 2000, p. 1508.
21. Venuti, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20.

At the same time, his choice of language echoes his appeal for the institutionalisation of a "federal concept of Irish English[22]". In *Ireland and the English Crisis*, he states that "the language question is about nationhood and government[23]". Thus, he implies that the language of the coloniser has taken on an authoritarian position, which has to be revised. As language and culture are inextricably bound together, the English language needs to be "first deconstructed and then redefined[24]" to be capable of becoming "the flexible written instrument of a complete cultural idea[25]". The establishment of an "Irish English" language, Paulin maintains, would help to generate a common state of mind in favour of the idea of a non-sectarian United Ireland. It could be argued that in his translation, he sets out to "invigorate[26]" the English language by means of vernacular terms. Through the integration of new images, concepts and alternative speech forms, Paulin departs from the Russian original in a subtle way, attempting to "personalise" Akhmatova's poem and imbue it with his own political standpoints.

In contrast to the previous poem, Paulin's translation of "Le Squelette" moves away from the source text in a significant way. Paulin does not only change the meaning of whole sentences, but also replaces entire passages of the original with lines of his own. Apart from that, the used language becomes more obviously politicised. Paulin's translation has to be regarded as "domesticating" in a broader sense, as he takes a further step away from the original as he did in "March 1841". In the following, I shall still consider Paulin's translation as a "domesticating" one but will add the concept of translation as "rewriting" in terms outlined by Scott and Lefevere[27]. Scott considers the source text of a certain translation as "an instrument by which the translator explores his own voice[28]". He argues that a source text is only one realisation of a whole set of possible expressive potentialities which predate it[29]. According to Scott, the translator extends the expressive relevance of the original, letting it operate in a new creative context. In this way, the target text gives rise to new ways of thinking about the source text's subject.

"Le Squelette" was published in 1884 in Verlaine's collection of poetry *Jadis et Naguère*. Paulin not only translates but also "recreates" the French poem, as he shifts the thematic focus of the original from literature to politics. He uses the source text as a frame to explore his political views on Northern Ireland, engaging with the consequences of warfare. The French original, however, does not have any politi-

22. Paulin, *Ireland, op. cit.*, p. 191.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Lefevere, *op. cit.*, p. VII.
28. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
29. Scott, *op, cit.*, p. 8.

cal dimension. It reads as a parody of the picaresque novel, a literary genre which originates in 16th century Spain, and parodies the medieval romance of chivalry. In the picaresque novel, the comic adventures of a hero of low social class are depicted in order to expose the corrupt nature of society. While in the romance of chivalry the action develops around an honourable knight, in the picaresque novel the protagonist is conceived as an anti-hero far from meeting the ideals of courtly chivalry. The picaresque novel is marked by the realistic and detailed depiction of unpleasant aspects of human existence. The illustrated human weakness receives a comic distortion through an exaggerated representation.

In "Le Squelette", the characteristics of the picaresque novel are imitated and amplified in a grotesque way. The speaker narrates the story of two drunken horsemen, who ride through the fields and come across a disintegrating human body. Paulin locates his translation in present-day Northern Ireland through the use of vernacular vocabulary and contemporary slang. In the first line of his poem, he translates "deux reîtres" ("two riders") by means of the Ulster Scots terms "two pachels", signifying "blundering, inefficient worker[30]". The adjective "saoul" ("drunk"), which Verlaine uses to describe the two horsemen, is translated by the contemporary Anglo-Irish slang term "stocious", meaning "entirely drunk[31]". Furthermore, in the French original the two characters "run" through "the fields", whereas in Paulin's translation they "lurch back" over a "battlefield". Replacing "fields" by "battlefield", he evokes "warfare" and thus draws attention to the central theme of his poem. The dialectical term "lurch" translates into Standard English "to steal about suspiciously[32]" and renders an ironic picture of the two riders. Seen in the context of the described battlefield and in the light of contemporary Northern Ireland, the two horsemen can be interpreted as "warriors" or "soldiers" and read as an allusion to the British Army as well as the paramilitary organisations of both sides. Presenting the two riders in a grotesque light, Paulin questions their authority as fighters involved in a political struggle. In this way, he points at the absurdity of the Northern Irish conflict, shedding a critical light on violence as a means to resolve political discrepancies. It could be said that in the case of Paulin's translation of "Le Squelette", the source text progresses through the new connotations and additional concepts added to it. Speaking in Tony Harrison's terms, Paulin's translation "reenergizes[33]" Verlaine's poem with the help of references to Northern Ireland.

In the second part of "Le Squelette", Verlaine elaborates the comic encounter between the two horsemen and the skeleton. In their drunken state the two "heros"

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30. James Fenton, 2000. "Ulster-Scots-Agency". [*http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/ulster-scots-words.asp?letter=p*] (15.01.10).
31. John Ayto, *Oxford Dictionary of Slang*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 151.
32. Sinclair, *op. cit.*, 925.
33. T. Harrison, *Phaedra Britannica*, London, Rex Collings, 1976, p. vi.

decide to offer a drink to the dead body. Illustrating their grotesque behaviour in an exaggerated way, Verlaine aims at a humoresque subversion of the ill-fated protagonists in the picaresque novel. Thus, he achieves a parody of a literary genre which in itself is already a parody. Paulin, however, underlines the added political dimension of his translation by dwelling on images of war and destruction:

Or, peu mystique, nos capitaines Fracasse Songèrent (John Falstaff lui-même en eût frémi) Qu'ils avaient bu, que tout vin bu filtre et s'égoutte, Et qu'en outre ce mort avec son chef béant Ne serait pas fâché de boire aussi sans doute. (Verlaine [a])	So not being mystical, our two Captain Fracasses Thought (even John Falstaff would have shuddered) That they had drunk and that all the drunk wine drained away And in addition that this dead body with its gaping gullet would not mind having a drink as well. (my translation)	but then they see this gnawed daft […] skeleton lying there among the puddles and shell-holes the mud the debris the bust abandoned weapons - like a trapdoor its mouth gapes open as it lies there static a bleached symbol of ending (Paulin [b])

c. Verlaine, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
d. Paulin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Calling the two horsemen "Capitain Fracasse", Verlaine alludes to the comic protagonist of the picaresque novel "Capitaine Fracasse" by Théophile Gauthier and thus highlights the parodic character of his poem. Through the reference to John Falstaff, a Shakespearian figure of scandal and subversion, Verlaine yet again exposes the grotesque nature of the two horsemen. The fact that even the unscrupulous Falstaff would have been appalled by the idea of treating the dead body with a drink underscores the absurdity and inappropriateness of the two characters' behaviour. With his portrayal of the two horsemen, Verlaine mocks the traditional protagonists of the picaresque novel lacking in moral values and social sophistication.

Paulin in his translation echoes the humorous tone of the French original. Presenting the disturbing content of his poem in a comic way, he implicitly refers to the picaresque novel, which is marked by the discrepancy between its serious content and its comic form. However, through his choice of imagery and language, Paulin creates a more disturbing atmosphere. Adding to the source text terms such as "shellholes", "debris", "weapons" and "trapdoors", he evokes devastation and destruction more explicitly. Thus, he creates a gloomy picture hinting at the pointlessness of political violence. Through the use of the word "static" and the description of the skeleton as a "bleached symbol of ending", Paulin alludes to stagnation and the absence of positive prospects for the future. "The Skeleton" is marked by an awareness of the subversive power of language.

Conceiving his poem as a parody of war and alluding to genres such as the picaresque novel, children's literature and to French symbolist poetry, Paulin sheds a new light on the Troubles. In contrast to Verlaine, who as a member of the Parnassian poets, does not aim at a discussion of moral and social issues in his poem, Paulin uses "The Skeleton" to condemn warfare. Whereas for Verlaine the aim of poetry is a purely aesthetic and non-political one[34], Paulin argues that poetry does not exist in "a timeless vacuum or a sound proof museum[35]" and should engage with shortcomings of society. In "The Skeleton", Paulin uncovers a variety of discourses and speech forms in order to explore the Northern Irish conflict through an alternative framework. Deviating from linguistic norms through the use of slang terms and the vernacular, Paulin exploits the possibilities of language. With the play with different forms of language, he attempts to break free from the established one sided discourse of the Troubles, in which authors traditionally take the part of one or the other ethno-religious community. In so doing, he sets out to find an appropriate poetic voice in which to engage with the consequences of political violence.

In his translation of Heine's "When I made happy by beautiful kisses", Paulin moves even further away from the original as he did in "The Skeleton". It could be argued that he pushes a domesticating approach to its extremes. The digression from the source text manifests itself already in the choice of title: refusing to translate the German title, Paulin calls his poem "Don't". As the meaning of the title only becomes evident against the overall context of the poem, the connection to the source text becomes blurred. Paulin's translation of the German poem could therefore be seen as a "creative act[36]" or as "experimental writing[37]" through which the distinction between authoring and translation becomes obscured. Paulin enters a relationship with Heine, which amounts to "co-authorship[38]", as he uses the German source text merely as the starting point for his own creative writing. According to Lefevre, all rewriting of an original text reflects a certain ideology and functions in a manipulative way in order to operate in a given society[39]. In the translation of Heine's poem, a certain "manipulation" of the original becomes evident: Paulin considerably departs from the original after a very short engagement with it and imbues it with new political connotations.

Choosing a poem by Heine as a source text for his translation, Paulin refers to one of the most controversial German poets. In his poetry, Heine attacked German chauvinism, feudalism and absolutism. Promoting social equality, he revolted

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34. Cf. Henri Troyat, *Verlaine*, Paris, Flammarion, 1993, p. 45.
35. Tom Paulin, "Introduction", *The Faber Book of Political Verse*, ed. Tom Paulin, London, Faber, 1986, p. 17.
36. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
38. C. Scott, *Translating Baudelaire*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2000, p. 9.
39. Lefevere, *op. cit.*, p. VII.

against the reigning monarchy. Heine's critical and satirical writing brought him into serious difficulties with the German censorship so that he decided to emigrate to France in 1831. Having fallen out of favour with the German state, he was forced to stay in France until his death. In this way, his voluntary exile turned into an imposed one[40]. Heine's rejection of the existing social order in 19th century Germany and his emigration must have had some bearing on Paulin's interest in the German poet. As Heine, Paulin considers himself as a political dissident. Advocating for a United Ireland, he goes against the political values cherished by his own Protestant community. In this way, he refuses to accept the status quo in Northern Ireland in the same way as Heine rejected the repressive monarchy in Germany. Similar to the German poet, Paulin left his native country. Having moved to England after a childhood in Belfast, he regards himself as "a kind of immigrant or émigré"[41], moving between different cultures. Paulin can be regarded as an "Ulsterman déraciné" in more than one way[42], as he occupies the position of an outsider in both England and Northern Ireland. While in England, in his "chosen exile", Paulin stands out against the local population because of his Northern Irish background, in Northern Ireland he remains an outcast due to his refusal to clearly belong to one of the two communities. His "internal" and "external" immigration points at a further parallel to Heine. Neither in Germany, nor in France did Heine manage to be "at home". In Germany he was rejected because of his Jewish roots and had to wrestle with anti-Semitism even after his conversion to Protestantism. In France, he never fully integrated into the local society as he still regarded Germany as his "fatherland" and "spiritual home[43]".

The given biographical parallels between Paulin and Heine show in the juxtaposition of "Wenn ich beseligt von schönen Küssen" and "Don't". In the German source text, as well as in Paulin's translation, the central themes are exile and displacement:

Wenn ich beseligt von schönen Küssen, In deinen Armen mich wohl befinde, Dann mußt du mir nie von Deutschland reden; -	When I, made happy by your beautiful kisses, lie in your arms,	Don't mention it ever – not when we're lying in bed or eating dinner not when I'm making a meal of your wet cunt don't mention Deutschland to me.
(Heinea [e])	do not mention Germany to me. (my translation)	(Paulin [f])

e. Heine, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
f. Paulin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

40. J. Hauschild, Werner, M., *Heinrich Heine*, Munich, DTV, 2002, p. 55.
41. Haffenden, *op. cit*, p. 157.
42. A. Robinson, *Instabilities in Contemporary British Poetry*, London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 100.
43. Hauschild, Werner, *op. cit.*.

In the first stanza of the original, Heine's negative attitude towards his home country becomes evident through the unambiguous line: "Do not mention Germany to me". The evoked warm relationship between the speaker and his lover presents a sharp contrast to the speaker's dismissive remark about Germany. Thus, Heine implies that his "love affair" with Germany is over. The fact that the poet left his native country due to political persecution and censorship seems to explain the harsh tone of the quoted lines. In "Don't" Paulin takes up Heine's image of an amorous relationship, imbuing it with explicit sexual connotations. Replacing Heine's "beautiful kisses" with "wet cunt", he chooses vulgar over poetic language in order to give his lines a more scathing tone. Through the use of slang and colloquial abbreviations such as "we're" and "don't", Paulin creates his own language and sets Heine's poem in a contemporary context. Employing the German word "Deutschland" as a "foreignizing element[44]", he underlines the connection to the source text before noticeably leaving it behind. In the first stanza of "Don't" the reader could gain the impression that Paulin engages with the historical situation in Germany at Heine's time. In the course of the poem, however, it shows that Paulin merely uses 19th century Germany as a lens to engage with Northern Ireland. Whereas Heine in his second stanza continues to give voice to his rejection of the existing social order in Germany, Paulin introduces Northern Irish concepts in order to translocate his translation into an alternative cultural environment:

Ich kanns nicht vertragen – es hat seine Gründe Ich bitte dich, laß mich mit Deutschland in Frieden! Du mußt mich nicht plagen mit ewigen Fragen Nach Heimat, Sippschaft und Lebensverhältnis; – Es hat seine Gründe – ich kanns nicht vertragen. (Heine [g])	I cannot bear it – it has its reasons. I pray you, leave me in peace with Germany! Don`t torment me with endless questions about home, family and way of life; – It has its reasons – I can't bear it. (my translation)	all that's been written and said about homeland, family slums I've gone right the way through it so don't tell me I want to go back – all the cards are there on the table but the table's a long way away (Paulin [h])

g. Heine, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
h. Paulin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

In Heine's poem, the "reasons" for the speaker's emigration are not cited but merely hinted at. In this way, he implies that they would be too painful to be spelled out. The notion of "pain" is taken up in the verb "torment", which sug-

44. Venuti, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20.

gests a tense relationship between the speaker and his home country. The unexplained "reasons" read as a subversive attack at German monarchy and as a criticism of the repressive politics carried out under the authoritarian regime. Along these lines, the concept of "home" takes on a negative meaning: it appears outdated and a thing of the past. Implying the speaker's mental and spatial distance from Germany, Heine engages with the themes of "exile" and "uprootedness".

In his translation, Paulin introduces politicised Northern Irish concepts through the terms "homeland" and "family slums". With "homeland" Paulin refers to colonisation and invasion. Implying that "homeland" equals "disputed land", he suggests that both religious communities in Northern Ireland claim possession of the same land. Through the term "family slums", Paulin clearly hints at the discrimination against Catholics. Whereas the Protestant community was supported by the British state, its Catholic counterpart suffered from political and social inequality in terms of employment, housing and civil rights. "Family slums" hint at the appalling conditions in which many Catholics had to live with their often large families. The line "all that's been written and said" reads as an articulation of scorn about the interminable discussions about the Northern Irish situation. In this way, Paulin captures the political atmosphere in Northern Ireland at the time when the poem was translated. First published in *Walking a Line* in 1994, the translation of "Don't" was most likely written before the first ceasefire declaration of the IRA. Therefore it can be argued that it reflects the disappointment about the slow moving Peace Process largely felt by the Northern Irish population. In Paulin's translation the rejection of the speaker's native country is pronounced in a more emphatic way than in the German original. He replaces Heine's "leave me in peace with Germany" with "don't tell me I want to go back", and thus gives voice to his pessimism about the Northern Irish situation. Scott's perception of translation as "recreation" seems to apply in a particular way to Paulin's translation of Heine's poem. In Scott's terms, the translation could be regarded as "a response" to a specific "textual opportunity"[45]. In this manner, Paulin's poem assures the progress of the source text in what Walter Benjamin calls the original's "afterlife[46]".

In his engagement with the translation of poems by Akhmatova, Verlaine and Heine, Paulin contemplates the Northern Irish situation through the lens of French, Russian and German poetry. With his poetics he sets out to "give a sense of history and society[47]" in order to open up new imaginative ways in which to do so. In an interview he states: "What I really want to do is to punch holes in

45. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
46. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: an Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's 'Tableaux Parisiens'", Venuti, L. (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader. Second Edition*, London, Routledge, 2008, p. 20.
47. Haffenden, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

history – tunnel through it – in order to get out into a kind of freedom which is contemplation and vision[48]". In his translation of the poems we have studied, Paulin seeks to achieve the desired vision by creating a geographical and mental distance to Northern Ireland. Through the juxtaposition of different world views, he attempts to find an appropriate poetic voice to generate alternative visions of Northern Ireland which are free from absolutes. His translations enable him to experiment with different registers and dialects of English as well as foreign vocabulary. Employing a language in his translation containing German vocabulary, as well as English slang and vernacular terms, Paulin sets out to subvert the traditional discourse of the Northern Irish conflict, in which words easily take on propagandistic meanings. In this way, he aims at the deconstruction of the so-called Northern Irish "war of words[49]", the linguistic propaganda war carried out during the Troubles in order to win over the "hearts and minds[50]" of the local population and to influence an international audience. In this sense, it could be argued that Paulin's translations act as a plea for an innovative vision of the Troubles. Through his individual use of language, he subversively questions the ways in which the media and the British government attempted to manipulate the public's perception of the Northern Irish conflict. Thus, he suggests that language as it currently exists cannot adequately engage with the situation in Northern Ireland. Implying that Northern Ireland has to be discussed in many "languages", he refuses to engage with the Troubles in sectarian terms. In this way, he suggests that new ways of expressions have to be generated in order to encourage new manners of thinking.

Paulin's aim, however, to promote an understanding of history through his poetry, has to be seen in relative and not in absolute terms. In his translation of "Le Squelette", he engages with an apolitical poem parodying a specific literary genre in order to express his rejection of warfare. Translating "Leningrad, March 1941", he attempts to establish a correlation between the Northern Irish Troubles and the political violence in Russia carried out during the Second World War. With the poem "Don't", he evokes a parallel between the authoritarian power structures of 19th century Germany and the established social order in Northern Ireland under British rule. In this context, the question arises whether his poems further a comprehension of the Northern Irish conflict or whether they amount to overstatements. Particularly, in the case of Paulin's translation of Akhmatova's and Heine's poems, it could be argued that the created parallels seem out of proportion. Considering that 19th century Germany was governed by an authorita-

48. *Ibid.*

49. Shane Alcobia-Murphy, *Governing the Tongue*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholar Press, 2005, p. vii.

50. L. Curtis, *Ireland and the Propaganda War. The British Media and the 'Battle for Hearts and Minds'*, London, Sásta, 1998.

rian monarch, the established parallel to Northern Ireland could be seen as excessive. Furthermore, one might argue that the cruelties committed in Russia during the German invasion are not on the same scale as the political violence during the Troubles. However, Paulin seems to have intentionally chosen to rework established notions of power through amplification in order to give emphasis to his political views and to draw attention to the Northern Irish conflict on an international level. Through his translations of foreign poems, he responds to the Troubles in his personal poetic voice, rejecting the established discourse of republican nationalism and loyalist unionism. "Extending the expressive relevances of the originals[51]", Paulin – as proposed in his epilogue "Rue Solitaire[52]" – "writes the poems out" in his own language and creates poetic works in their own right. Pleading for a widening of perspectives and the suppression of local and provincial sentiments, Paulin attempts to move away from the eatsian concept of "great hatred – little room", and rejects a restricted, biased vision of the Northern Irish conflict.

51. Scott, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
52. Paulin, *op. cit.*, p. 100.